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THE STORY OF ELEUSIS

LOUIS V. LEDOUX

THE STORY OF ELEUSIS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

YZDRA (Poetic Drama)
THE SHADOW OF ÆTNA
ETC.

THE
STORY OF ELEUSIS

A Lyrical Drama

BY
LOUIS V. LEDOUX

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1916

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Set up and electrotyped. Published October, 1916.

Norwood Press
J. S. Cushing Co. — Berwick & Smith Co.
Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.

TO
E. A. R.
AND
R. T.

357986

THANKS are due the editors of *Harper's Monthly*, *The Poetry Review of America*, *The Yale Review* and Messrs. G. P. Putnam's Sons, for permission to publish in whole or in part the first four acts of this drama.

THE ARGUMENT

OF holy Demeter, giver of grain, is the story; and of her daughter, the maiden Persephone whom Hades bore away to be his Queen among the dead. As she was gathering flowers in a meadow he seized her and Demeter knew it not. A long time she searched, withholding her gifts from mortals; but at length Helios, who seeth all things, told her how Hades, with the consent of Zeus, had borne away the maiden to rule beside him in his dark hall. Then Demeter forsook the company of the Immortals and became as a woman of the earth, old and worn with sorrow; and having cursed the ground with barrenness that it should bear no more fruit, she seated herself by a roadside well and bowed her

head, sorrowing. There the daughters of Celeus, King of Eleusis, found her and, having pity on her, led her to their Father's hall where none knew her, and she became the nurse of the child Demophon. Tenderly she nursed him, and each night privily she laid him among the burning brands that he might become like one of the Immortals. But when the Mother had seen this, Demeter revealed herself and departed.

Meanwhile in the underworld, Persephone sat sorrowing; and on earth the famine grew so sore that after a time Zeus sent Hermes, the swift messenger, to bring the maiden back, and Hades, her Lord, gave consent. Then joyfully she returned to her mother; but it is the law that whosoever has tasted food in the Kingdom of Hades can never be wholly freed, and Persephone, having eaten there of the seeds of the pomegranate, each year must go again to dwell for a little among the dead.

When the maiden had been restored to her, Demeter bade the earth to bloom afresh; and she dwelt in a temple built for her by the people of Eleusis, helping them with her counsel. There each year when leaves were falling and the seed lay hidden in the ground was this story enacted, but none has described what he saw in that temple, for the story was a sacred story and the meaning was for each alone.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ACT I. — PERSEPHONE	{	Persephone Cyane Arethusa Galatea Hades	
ACT II. — BESIDE THE WELL . .	{	Demeter Hecate Callithoe Callidice Cleisidice Demo	<i>The daughters of Celeus</i>
ACT III. — DEMETER AT ELEUSIS .	{	Celeus Metaneira A Man of Eleusis	
ACT IV. — PERSEPHONE IN HADES	{	An Old Man A Newcomer A Woman A Young Man	
ACT V. — THE TEMPLE		Triptolemus	

Spirits of the Dead.

Men and Women of Eleusis.

ACT I
PERSEPHONE

B

I

ACT I

A cliff rising abruptly from the northern shore of Lake Pergusa in Sicily. A few scattered boulders below. From the top of the cliff slopes upward the field of Enna. It is early spring and there are innumerable violets which give a bluish tinge to the hillside. Here and there are other flowers; crocus, hyacinth, poppy, flag, roses, and narcissus. In the distance on the east rises Ætna.

On the top of the cliff are seated CYANE, ARETHUSA, and GALATEA. PERSEPHONE stands a little behind them on the lower slope of the field, looking out across the lake. It is early morning.

PERSEPHONE

Up from Egypt and the Southland,
See! the wild, white cranes are flying.

CYANE

In the air I hear their crying.

ARETHUSA

Hark! Again. And now more loud.

GALATEA

Dark against the sky they show.

CYANE

Where?

GALATEA

To southward, like a cloud
Hung between the sky and ocean.
Swift and steady is their motion.

ARETHUSA

More like arrows from a bow.

CYANE

Now I see them coming nearer.
Are they stooping toward the shore?

PERSEPHONE

O wild white cranes, come down to me!

ARETHUSA

Now their cries are ringing clearer.
See! A downward course they take.

GALATEA

There against the sun are more.

CYANE (*to* PERSEPHONE)

Now so low the first are flying,
I can see their shadow lying
Dark and wedge-like on the lake.

ARETHUSA (*to* PERSEPHONE)

They have settled just below.

PERSEPHONE (*singing*)

Heart of a bird! Heart of a bird!
O the wild, white cranes are free;
But the heart of man has a song unheard
That the sea-wind knows, and the sea.
Heart of a bird! Heart of a bird!
O wild, white cranes that fly

Over all the lands that the oceans gird,
What have you more than I?

What have you more than I have had
From the winds and the sun and the sea?
Is the heart of a bird like a man's heart sad
And crying ceaselessly?

GALATEA

Did Hecate see you as you slept last night,
And weave the yellow moonbeams round your
heart;
Or Aphrodite from her Eastern isle
Send out some scarlet-vestured dream that
leaves
This cry of human longing on your lips?

PERSEPHONE

I know not why it is my clouded mind
The gold of such a sunrise turns to gray.
The song I heard a fisher-maiden sing
One bird-thrilled dawn, when here alone I sat,

And back of Ætna shone the coming rose.
Beneath me spread a sea of moving mist
Whose silver bosom softly rose and fell
In rhythmic undulation of slow waves
That soundless broke upon the cliff below.
There white it lay and palely luminous,
A sea that had no cadenced undertone;
And as I watched its gleaming billows roll,
And thought how all beneath was gray and
 chill,
My heart was troubled by a song that rose
From where the shrouded lake in darkness lay :
The fisher-maiden sang, and I went down ;
But when I asked, she knew not what it meant,
Or could not put in words the thing she knew ;
And I came back, but Ætna's rose was gone.

GALATEA

A tale I heard that men are cursed with souls ;
But what souls are I know not.

ARETHUSA

I have heard
The soul is hunger ever unappeased,
And thirst by all earth's fountains unassuaged.

PERSEPHONE

The soul is darkness waiting for the dawn,
And, if dawn comes, is day that longs for dusk;
And not to men as to the soulless beasts
Is death a sudden stranger.

CYANE

Close beside,
With following footfalls through the crispèd
leaves
That edge their pathway, rustling, death unseen,
A dread companion, waits his destined hour;
And now upon a turning shoulder breathes,
And now, an obscure shadow, dims the day.

GALATEA

The cranes rise up again.

PERSEPHONE

Spring's harbingers.

Now where they pass will green come stealing up
Expectant valleys where the brown brooks run,
And dot with scattered tufts the meadowlands.

ARETHUSA

They fly the Pygmies' war.

CYANE

It is the hour

When we are wont to sing our hymn to her
Who leads despondent summer from the south
To beauty's bright renewal — blade and bud.

GALATEA *and* ARETHUSA

Weave we now the sacred dances;
Praise we now Demeter's name;
Bright the dew-starred cobweb glances,
On the altar leaps the flame.

CYANE *and* PERSEPHONE

In the mystic measure swaying,
Great Demeter we entreat :
Mother hear thy children praying !
Bring the barley, bring the wheat.

CHORUS

(Hymn to Demeter)

Weave the dance, and raise again the sacred chorus;
Wreath the garlands of the spring about the
hair;
Now once more the meadows burst in bloom
before us,
Crying swallows dart and glitter through the air.
Glints the plowshare in the brown and fragrant
furrow;
Pigeons coo in shady coverts as they pair;
Come the furtive mountain folk from cave and
burrow,
Lean, and blinking at the sunlight's sudden glare.

Bright through midmost heaven moves the lesser
Lion;

Hide the Hyades in ocean caverns hoar;
Past the shoulders of the sunset flames Orion,
Following the Sisters seaward evermore.

Gleams the east at evening, lit by low Arcturus.

Out to subtle-scented dawns beside the shore,
Yet a little and the Pleiades will lure us:
Weave the dance and raise the chorus as of
yore.

Far to eastward up the fabled gulf of Issus,

Northward, southward, westward, now the
trader goes,

Passing headlands clustered yellow with narcissus,

Bright with hyacinth, with poppy, and with rose.

Shines the sea and falls the billow as undaunted,

Past the rising of the stars that no man knows,
Sails he onward through the islands siren-haunted,
Till the clashing gates of rock before him close.

Kindly Mother of the beasts and birds and
flowers,

Gracious bringer of the barley and the grain,
Earth awakened feels thy sunlight and thy
showers;

Great Demeter! Let us call thee not in vain.
Lead us safely from the seedtime to the thresh-
ing,

Past the harvest and the vineyard's purple
stain;

Let us see thy corn-pale hair the sunlight mesh-
ing,

When the sounding flails of autumn swing
again.

GALATEA

Where is the mother now, Persephone?

PERSEPHONE

I felt her stoop to kiss me as I slept,
And looking, saw the East's primeval calm.

CYANE

Before the dawn had showed its first gray gleam,
Ere yet the earliest bird some snatch of song
Or half-forgotten cadence heard in sleep,
Had warbled waking, she had yoked her car
And fared far out across the starlit foam
Whose silver blossoms close not with the night,
Bearing the earth-brown mortals gifts of spring.

PERSEPHONE

She gives her golden store to all the lands
That Ocean laps within his slumbrous folds,
And strange it is to think that far from here
The darker folk of Nilus and the South,
Yea all that dwell beyond the ocean haze,
Look up from toil to give Demeter thanks,
While on them, down the almond-vistaed spring
Steal recollections faint of what they were
Before the soul had sapped their strength away
And set them groping darkly through the earth
For things that are not, and can never be.

CYANE

Their ashen hearts remembrance kindles now,
And long-forgotten moods and motions bud
In barren breasts to burst in rose and gold,
Petal by petal opened, making dim
The dun, habitual aspects of the world.

ARETHUSA

Apollo mounts, and still we loiter here,
Leaving Demeter's altar unadorned.
The flowers will lose their early loveliness
If long they gaze on him, and soon his beams
Will drink the freshness from each veinèd cup,
For dewdrops, like to swans, just ere they pass
Attain their height of beauty.

GALATEA

Now their gleam
Is like the foam-stars on the veil of light
That wrapped the Paphian when at first she shone
Within her curvèd shell, and round about,
Amazèd Ocean trembled, shimmering.

CYANE

What wealth of violets! About me here
They cluster thick as on the broidered veils
The sailors gain in barter over seas.
I know not which to pick, the blue or pied,
The sturdy yellow or these dainty white.

ARETHUSA

I pick the crocus, Smilax' gentle friend,
For Crocus died of unrequited love,
So legends tell, and when beside my heart
I lay his tender blossom, oft I think
If one loved me so well he should not die.

GALATEA

If one loved me, I'd play him many pranks
And tease him till his love he did deny —
But love the more — and from the waves I'd
 laugh
To see him pace the shore disconsolate.

ARETHUSA

I know not what it is that I would do :
I could not choose but pity, yet would fear
To loose my maiden zone and so to lose
This rippling girlhood.

GALATEA

You would run or hide,
With tears and laughter mingled, babbling still.

CYANE

I would not wish for Aphrodite's flame,
Or change the love I know for love unknown ;
This cool, sweet converse on the morning hills,
The linkèd roamings with Persephone
Suffice my need of loving, nor would I,
For other love, one petal pluck from this.

PERSEPHONE

I wonder will the seeds of Fate unfold
For good or ill. So happy are we now.

(CYANE, one arm laden with flowers, goes over, puts her other arm about PERSEPHONE, and kisses her.)

CYANE

Surely we shall be ever as we are.

PERSEPHONE

Ah no! Not Zeus himself can hold the spring,
For in the bud is autumn's withered leaf.

(She moves slowly up the hillside, away from the others, gathering flowers as she goes.)

GALATEA

The ever mournful hyacinth I pluck,
Yet not because its petals tell of pain,
But for the head with tightly clustered curls,
The noble discus player in his strength,
Whose stalwart beauty wrought his overthrow.

CYANE

Go not too far up field, Persephone,

Demeter bade us watch you, lest you stray
And some swift harm befall.

PERSEPHONE

Fear not for me ;

I gather rose and lily, poppies too,
And there ahead the bright narcissus shines.
No danger lurks within this field of flowers,
The gliding emerald snakes I oft have touched,
And naught else is there save the sky and you,
The lake, and far-off Ætna crowned with snow.

ARETHUSA (*singing*)

High on her mountain throne,
Ever aloof, alone,
(Clouds are her maiden zone)
Ætna the white doth sit,
Hearing the Titans groan
Chained in their sunless pit,
Whence to the earth are blown,

Thwarting Demeter's plan,
Flames by Hephæstus lit.

White on her mountain throne,
Ever aloof, alone,
(Clouds are her maiden zone)
Silent doth Ætna sit,
Watching the doubtful strife
Waged since the world began :
Parched are the springs of life,
Earth with the seed is rife ;
Poised are the fates of man.

(PERSEPHONE *has gone far up the field and is now
on the shoulder of the hill about to pass out of sight.*)

CYANE (*calling*)

Persephone !

PERSEPHONE

Just here below I see
Narcissus with a hundred golden flowers,
A wondrous bloom.

CYANE

A moment, and I come.

(PERSEPHONE *disappears over the edge of the hill.*)

ARETHUSA (*after a pause*)

A sudden darkness falls!

GALATEA

A strange green light

As sometimes at the sunset wraps the sea

When heavy storm-clouds hang within the west.

ARETHUSA

I hear a distant rumbling as of thunder,

And look, the flowers are trembling on their
stalks!

GALATEA

Now comes it nearer!

ARETHUSA

Help! I cannot stand.

The earth heaves up and sways beneath my feet.

(*The darkness grows swiftly deeper. ARETHUSA
and GALATEA fall prone.*)

CYANE (*on the edge of the hill*)

Where art thou? Quick! The great earth
heaves and rends;

I hear a trampling as of thunder steeds,
And see a blackness shot with moving flames;
But where thou art, I see not. Quick! To me!
Persephone!

VOICE OF HADES

Nay, to me!

PERSEPHONE

Ai! Ai!

CYANE

God! Aïdes! Spare her!

(*On the edge of the hill is seen for a moment,
obscurely through the darkness, a golden chariot
drawn by wild black horses; the wheels are like*

revolving yellow flames. In the car stands HADES, black bearded and dressed all in black with a golden crown. He has one arm about PERSEPHONE, crushing her flowers against him, and with the other he guides the plunging horses. CYANE flings herself at the head of the nearer horse, trying to clutch his mane and nostrils, but misses her hold and falls beneath the car. There is another loud roar as of thunder.)

ACT II
BESIDE THE WELL

ACT II

At the side of a country road near Eleusis, in Attica. In the foreground, beyond the road, is a well overhung by a gnarled and ancient olive tree. Behind this a field slopes gently southward to the sea. It is the close of the dark hour just before dawn, and as the scene progresses, the outline of the island of Salamis becomes visible in the distance. Beside the well stands DEMETER with blazing torches in her hands. She is wrapped in a dark blue mantle and hood, but her majestic form and face are dimly visible. Near her stands HECATE in a shimmering yellow mantle that is iridescent as it catches the flickering light. In her hand is a torch, the flame of which changes as day dawns, from yellow to silver. The earth is parched and bare. When the scene opens, DEMETER is standing

motionless, gazing ahead of her with expressionless eyes. After a pause she lowers her torches and extinguishes them in the dust of the road.

DEMETER

Beside this well the wandering foot shall rest,
And here be quenched in earth the blazing pine;
How useless now! since Helios tells me all —
The source and sum of sorrow. Light goes not
To that dark house where Hades holds — Ah me!
There is no need of searching any more.
Beside the dusky river she will go
With flowerless hands, and hear no happy bird,
But only muffled murmurs of the stream,
And somewhere in the mist a moving oar;
And I will dwell on earth where sorrow dwells,
Nor go among the laughter-loving gods
As once in glory; yea, like Earth herself,
Will wear the robe of twilight, casting off
The splendors of my clear divinity

To live with grief's familiars undiscerned,
A woman old, and worn with many tears.

HECATE

Since thou an earthly semblance wilt assume,
And veil thy form divine in wrinkled eld,
Thy peers forsaking, and the windy height
Of cloud-enwrapped Olympus where they dwell,
Such comfort lodge within thine aching breast
As mortal mothers have when children die.

DEMETER

When to a Mother's ears a child that died
Seems crying in the night, she starts awake
And gropes with outstretched hands toward
 where he lay
To find how answerless is Zeus' decree,
How unavailing tears. What comfort that
For me on whom abysmal darkness falls —
The dark and chill of space if thou wert not,

Hyperion dead, and dead the roving stars —
While through me whirl and cry the storms of hate,
No drifting gust of unrebelling tears.

HECATE

Thou canst not strive with Zeus, nor conquer Fate.

DEMETER

He slew my lover once; I cursed him not;
But now long watch of man that hopes and dies,
Has made me something other than I was,
Lower it may be, yet perchance more high;
And with this new infusion fills my heart
The deep-mouthed curse that climbs against the
stars
And hurls itself in wild, foredoomed assault,
On battlements that broke the Titans' war.

HECATE

Thy love for men I know.

DEMETER

I love them not,
But pitied them, the blind earth-crawling race,
That reach, so eager, upward toward the light,
To clutch at last the old, forlorn despair;
And more obeyed an instinct in myself
Which made me raise anew what death destroyed,
While Zeus with equal balance held the twain.
For life is like a mound of shifting sand
On some low island set in leagues of sea;
The winds of being blow from out the waste,
And up the beaches rolls the crumbling wave.
Ever I gave to men unnumbered seeds
And blind earth-forces working —

HECATE

Lo! the change!
Now look I down on bare, unfruitful fields
And cast my silver sheen on barrenness.

DEMETER

The change is here, in my unfruitful heart;
For I, like one who held a wisp of straw
Between the victim and the axe that falls,
Now see the waiting terror in his eyes
And bid the blade be keen, the stroke be swift.

HECATE

The mists of morning gather from the sea;
Farewell, I cannot linger.

DEMETER

Go thou on;
Sorrow, the eldest born of all the gods
And last that shall be, here remains with me.
Yea, last as first is she, for Zeus himself
On some undreamed of day will surely fall,
A midnight bulk across the ether crying;
And then will sorrow rule supreme, alone,
The huge unpeopled world and silent sky;
Till when are building wind and crumbling wave.

(Demeter seats herself beside the well, her head bowed in her hands. The figure of HECATE slowly fades away, and as it passes, her voice is heard singing.)

HECATE

The moving hands of Fate
That knows nor love nor hate,
Divided fortunes cast ;
And each must learn at last,
How blest soe'er his state,
To wander desolate,
Mourning for joy long past.

Of none that lives the lot
Is bliss that changes not,
But sorrow comes to all ;
Yea, Zeus himself shall fall,
Plunge like an arrow shot
Seaward, and be forgot,
Wrapped in her folding pall.

(The scene is now lit only by the first faint light of dawn, but as the day brightens, it shows that the form and aspect of DEMETER have changed. She appears bowed and shrunken, and when she raises her head, the face is that of an old, worn woman.)

DEMETER

The bolt of Zeus was wrapped in levin-light,
And in its flash I saw things as they are :
Earth's myriad slaves for whom the stolen fire
But lit the quenchless hopes that lure them on
To that dread gulf of darkness where they sink ;
And o'er them Zeus, himself in toils of Fate,
And pitiless as is the bolt he hurls.
Let sorrow's reign commence, I yield the strife,
And down the blackened hillsides bid her come,
Through barren valleys, bitter dells of drought
Where none shall stay her triumph as of old.

(The daughters of CELEUS, KING OF ELEUSIS, — CALLITHOE, CALLIDICE, CLEISIDICE and

DEMO — *are heard singing. They draw gradually nearer and finally come into sight, but DEMETER remains with her head bowed and does not notice them. On their shoulders they bear pitchers of bronze which catch the first rays of the sun. CALLITHOE is the eldest, CALLIDICE the most beautiful.*)

THE DAUGHTERS OF CELEUS

O Thou who alone of all the Immortals,
Lover of children and lover of earth,
Carest for man as a Mother, and caring
Bringest from darkness the blossoms of birth :
Gone is the joy of the womb that is bearing,
Fled from the harvest the song and the mirth.

Bryony garlanded Queen of the vineland,
Wardress of olive, Bringer of wheat,
Filled to the brim is the chalice of sorrow ;
Over the hills cometh pestilence fleet,
Cometh with famine, we die on the morrow :
Save us, Demeter ! —

DEMO

Look there, beside the well.

CALLIDICE

Mother.

DEMETER

Mother !

Who calls on me by that ill-omened name ?

CLEISIDICE

With us the name is blest. But who art thou ?
And what strange country reared thee ?

DEMETER

Mother !

CALLITHOE

Speak :

The stranger in Eleusis fears no harm.

DEMETER

Is this Eleusis ? Nay, I knew it not.
A midnight tale is mine of grief and death,
Ye could not comprehend, for youth is strange

To sorrow's ancient language, knowing not
Her speech comes native unto all at last.

CALLITHOE

Unlearned is youth and yet compassionate;
Of quick, responsive moods, and kindly tears.
Our father, Celeus, rules this lovely shore,
The friend of strangers is he, heeding Zeus
Who holds the guest-right sacred; he perchance
Would find some service fit for agèd hands,
For so is age most blest, with work to do,
And not to sit unneeded.

DEMO

We will run,
Our morning pitchers filled, and bring you word.

DEMETER

Behold I wait; and if ye seek a name,
Why, Deo is a name to call me by.

CALLIDICE

Despair not, Deo.

CALLITHOE

The cup of sorrow moves from lip to lip,
And though we drain it deep, it passes on.

CLEISIDICE

We too have tasted sorrow; see you not
That all the barley fields are parched and bare,
The olive shrivelled and the pasture brown?

*(They take up their pitchers and turn to the well,
singing as they fill them.)*

THE DAUGHTERS OF CELEUS

Deep the well and dark the water,
Far we let our pitchers down.
Prisoned water, prisoned water,
Fill the gleaming pitchers brown;
Fill and brim and sparkle after;
Pools of sunlight edged with laughter
Wait their guest in Celeus' town.

When we lean above the water,
Imaged in the twilight lies

One who comes for Celeus' daughter,
Kindly brave and kindly wise.
Shadowy layers of darkness cover
Him, the coming lord and lover —
Hers who has the brightest eyes.

CLEISIDICE

We go, and swiftly bring some word of cheer;
But you must pray the gods, for they are kind,
High Zeus and Queen Demeter, till we come.

(Exeunt.)

DEMETER

No more shall springtime blossom on the hills,
Or any harvest hymn be sung of men;
And none shall see me by the threshing floor
And nudge his neighbor, or with silent flail
In midmost stroke suspended, watch me pass;
But I, a bondmaid in the house of grief,
Will sit unnoticed, while the gray mist creeps
Forever inward till the hearth be cold.

ACT III

DEMETER AT ELEUSIS

ACT III

Hall in the house of CELEUS, KING OF ELEUSIS.

Primitive Greek architecture and decoration. Fire is burning on the hearth. At one side is a rude altar. Through an open door at the rear, the sea is visible in moonlight. A door on the left leads to the inner apartments. CELEUS and METANEIRA, his wife, are discovered on low seats; he with a table beside him bearing a bowl and pitcher of bronze and a golden goblet, and she carding wool by the light of an oil lamp.

METANEIRA

When Deo came as nurse to Demophon
The moon was at the full, and now once more
The golden pathway points across the sea.

CELEUS

I wonder sometimes if a man should sail
Straight on into the moonlight, on and on,
Whereto the path would lead him, death or life;
To some rich coast where sorrow has not come,
With olives mellow in a tempered sun
And sound of waters falling, or still on
Through shoreless wastes that roll toward alien
stars,
Forever and forever on and on.

METANEIRA

A little way we see through night and mist,
But all beyond is hidden from our sight.
If coasts there be unvisited by grief
We know not, yet on all the shores I know,
The white and barren beaches of the world,
Has sorrow wandered, and the washing waves
Wash not from any shore her steps away.

CELEUS

Not hard was life for us till on our track
We heard the wolves of famine. Now I rise
From haunted sleep wherein a storm of tears —
The weeping of my people — beats on me,
To watch their haggard faces, hear their griefs,
While day by day the coursing terror nears;
Nor know I prayer nor charm to drive it back.

METANEIRA

Like fishes swimming where the nets are spread,
Are men, surrounded by the toils of God
Whose meshes close about us ere we know.

CELEUS

And yet for man there is no open sea.

(A man enters, walking feebly, and seats himself at the hearth in the posture of a suppliant.)

THE MAN

A little food, I pray. My children die.
I cannot help them. By thy Father's knees,

And by what god to thee is most endeared,
And by thine own dear children, give me food !

CELEUS

I have no more to give.

METANEIRA

The will remains;
But sorrow's tide has risen day by day,
And as it rose the crowding suppliants came
To where, above the breakers, stood the King.

CELEUS

Cool earthen jars of wine our storerooms held,
Ranged row on row, and many jars of oil,
With barley bins and raisins hanging dry :
Who wills may see them ; not enough remains
To keep ourselves unfamished till the spring.
I cannot help you.

(DEMETER enters from within, unobserved, carrying the child. The man rises from the hearth and moves toward the outer entrance.)

THE MAN

Cruel are the gods,

Yet will they miss the steam of sacrifice,
Their adoration and accustomed prayer;
For now will no man praise them, nay, nor fear;
But raise with rituals of hate his pyres
Wherein the quenchless earth shall kindle flame —
A myriad flares beside the midnight sea,
And up the mountain sides a coil of fire.

(He goes out. CELEUS follows him to the outer door which he closes, dropping the bar into its place.)

DEMETER *(aside)*

Aye: There alone my curse can climb to Zeus,
Scaling the sheer and pathless cliffs of heaven;
But ah, how slow to end it all is death!

METANEIRA

Here Deo brings the baby fast asleep.

(The four girls enter from within.)

CALLITHOE

The doors are shut ; the slaves have gone to rest.
What further is your will ?

CELEUS

Naught else remains.

METANEIRA

Except performance of Demeter's rite.

(CALLITHOE takes burning coals from the hearth and places them in a brazier on the altar. She then passes a bowl of some cereal to her mother and sisters. Each of the women takes a few grains and the four maidens sprinkle theirs over the coals. DEMETER stands with averted face looking into the fire.)

THE MAIDENS

When the fledglings crowd the nest,
Fall and flutter through the leaves ;
Then, beside the reapers, rest
We who bind the golden sheaves.

Long the gleaming sickles hung

Hid in corners of the eaves;

Now the reaping song is sung:

Bind Demeter's golden sheaves.

Sent by her the rains descend,

Urged by her, the earth conceives;

Springs will come and winters end:

Maidens, bind the golden sheaves.

(METANEIRA goes to the altar and casts her offering into the brazier.)

METANEIRA

Far away the foaming glen,

Far the shadowed forest pool;

Here among the homes of men

Comes the twilight, kindly cool;

Come with blessing eve and morn,

Rest in toiling days of heat:

Summer's unexhausted horn

Pours its plenty at our feet.

CELEUS

How hollow rings the song! Suspend the rite,
For silence better seems than mockery,
The empty murmur of the harvest hymns
Unkerneled save of longing. Nay, no more.
Demeter cares not though her suppliants die,
But stands with face averted, deaf to prayer.

(DEMETER *clutches the child convulsively so that it cries in its sleep.* CELEUS *goes out hastily.*)

CLEISIDICE

What think you, Deo? Must a deed like this
Bring down an after sorrow? You are wise
And tell us many stories of the gods;
Would not Demeter — she of old was kind —
Forgive the broken rite, the word of bane?

DEMETER

My heart is troubled for you.

DEMO

Are the gods
So prone to anger, spite, and pettiness?

METANEIRA

Our hearts are schooled by sorrow to be kind,
But they whom sorrow has not taught are cold.
Go ye to rest; but I awhile must pray.
Across the pathless night some shaft of prayer
May wing to where she is and find her heart.
Guard well the baby, Deo.

(*To Callidice*) Rouse him not;

He soon will sleep again in Deo's arms.

(*They go out. DEMETER watches them and then walks up and down in front of the hearth, carrying the child.*)

DEMETER

Not yet the sea of death has reached the full,
For though I foster not life's pallid flower,
Still clings it creviced in the cold, gray cliff
Whose immemorial bulkhead fronts the deep;
And still the waves defeated fall in foam.
O little heart that beats against my own,

For you corruption waits, the range of woe;
And sorrows implicate within lie furled,
Man's passions, hope deferred and slow regret;
Yet as I may, I do requite your trust,
Easing your burden of mortality
With lustral fire to purge its taint away;
And give you — ah, not all that well I would! —
Yet something of my own divinity.

*(The child moves again in its sleep; DEMETER
sings.)*

O clinging hands, and eyes where sleep has set
Her seal of peace, go not from me so soon.
O little feet, take not the pathway yet,
The dust of other feet with tears is wet,
And sorrow wanders there with slow regret;
O eager feet, take not the path so soon.

Take it not yet, for death is at the end,
And kingly death will wait until you come.
Full soon the feet of youth will turn the bend,

The eyes will see where followed footsteps wend.
Go not so soon, though death be found a friend;
For kingly death will wait until you come.

(The child sleeps and she lays it on a skin by the hearth.)

They learn of love through sorrow; is it so?
And I, through sorrow, learn to know myself,
New valuing our cold divinity
And them who struggling raise with fruitless toil
The immaterial fabric of their lives,
While on them sweeps the night's resistless wind.

(She kneels beside DEMOPHON and after bending over him for a moment lifts him.)

Yet you, at least, I save as best I may;
The fire will make you pure and like the gods.

(As DEMETER turns with outstretched arms toward the hearth METANEIRA enters and, seeing what is about to happen, rushes forward with a scream.)

METANEIRA

My son ! My son !

(DEMETER casts the child on the floor and, rising, stands in anger above METANEIRA who, kneeling by the baby, does not fully comprehend her words nor see that as she speaks, DEMETER'S aspect changes, until she becomes once more the radiant goddess, majestic and beautiful, with yellow hair, and the stature of the Immortals.)

DEMETER

O witless workers of your own defeat !
Infatuate race that knows not good from ill !
I would have saved the child from painful age,
To be as are the gods, forever young ;
Yea, saved him from the Fates whose gifts are
tears
And made him deathless ; on the lips of men
A sign of joy and splendor. Lo ! and thou
Hast taken from him this that might have been ;

Yet all thou couldst not take, for still shall cling
About the deathward journey of the child
Some strange unnatural glory, and his eyes
Shall look beyond thee, seeing visions dim
Of recollected light that once he knew —
The child of earth Demeter touched with heaven.

METANEIRA

Demeter! Thou!

DEMETER

Heed well my words: Let all the people build
A temple fair to top the jutting rock;
For I will be among you till the end,
And there would hide my sorrow. Now I go.

ACT IV

PERSEPHONE IN HADES

ACT IV

By the side of a river of Hades. The river is at the rear, sluggish and dun-colored, with flat banks bordered by leafless willows. In front is a level meadow dotted with clumps of pale white asphodels. On the left is a circular open pavilion containing a marble couch covered by fabrics heavy with gold, and a stand on which is a golden bowl filled with the scarlet of cloven pomegranates. Far up the river on the right are the gray-green walls of the palace of Hades. There is no wind and no sound of the river or of birds. The sky is gray and the light dim as at the end of twilight. PERSEPHONE, attended by CYANE, is walking from the palace toward the pavilion.

PERSEPHONE

Never, never comes the spring ;
 Leafless still the willows stand
 Looking down the level land
Shadowless and slumbering.

Here the happy things are dreams :
 Only in a dream we live ;
 Glad for what a dream may give,
Phantom suns in phantom streams.

Glad for sights and sounds of home,
 Dream-remembered, unforgot ;
 Idle words we heeded not,
Flight of sea-gulls through the foam.

Happy dreams that cannot last !
 Life itself must come and go,
 As the summer shadows flow
Down the valleys of the past.

CYANE

You who have not wholly died,
You whose body grows not cold,
Queen of death and Hades' Bride
Can you clasp me as of old ?

Spread your arms, I am not there;
Turn to mine your eager lips,
Reach your hand to touch my hair,
From your hold a phantom slips.

PERSEPHONE

Never while earth in her gladness
Drinks of the sun and the rain,
Never shall spring with her madness
Lead us and lure us again :
Where there was joy there is sadness,
Where there was love there is pain.

Void are the arms of the Mother
Cold is the place at her side;

Yea, and I love not the other —
Dark is the lot of the bride,
Captive of Cronides' brother
Lord of the folk that have died.

CYANE

One is bereft but the other
Soon shall have joy of his bride.

PERSEPHONE

Nay, not of me nor another;
Cold will I sit by his side
Yearning for her, for the Mother,
Soothing the folk that have died.

(She reclines on the couch, CYANE standing behind her. An old man who, coming from the opposite direction, has overheard the last lines, pauses beside the pavilion and speaks.)

THE MAN

Thou who art here among the hapless dead,
A shaft of sunlight in a darkened house,

The stir of spring in winter's cold domain,
And girlhood once eternized; child of earth,
Come drifting downward through the cloven dark
To fan the flame of smoldered, old regret
In us, whose place of exile turns to home
Through long abiding, know thy soothing vain.
At first the exile walks the gray, bleak shore
And strains his eyes to seaward whence he came,
Yearning, and all his thoughts are like the sea;
But soon familiar seems the strange new land,
And eyes that saw the sun, accustomed grow
To twilight; slowly faint and far away
Seems all he left, and faint the call of life;
He looks no more to sea, nor from the shore
Watches the freighted driftwood floating in.
At first no comfort aids him and at last
The oil of soothing finds a closed wound.
But thou who art a fragrance known in youth,
Recalling moonlight by the loved-one's door
Above the hidden tumult of the sea,

For all the bitter guerdon of thy gift —
The ache of reawakened memory —
Art like the sight of unforgotten stars
To one long blind or pent in caves of night.

CYANE

Earth's million flowers have faded one by one,
And all her maidens go the way of death
To see no more the sun;
Some slow, with halting feet and painful breath,
And some — like runners ere the race be run,
Eager, with parted lips and eyes that flash,
Poised for the onward dash —
Are stricken ere the course is yet begun.

Yea, some must slowly fail and fade from sight,
And some in bloom of beauty come to die;
But like the swallow's flight
Is youth whose wingèd splendor flashes by
Too swift for measure of its lost delight,
And unrecorded, save in after grief

That knows how youth is brief —
As brief as summer lightning, and as bright.

PERSEPHONE

I knew not that the world was very old
And sad beneath the burden of its years,
But here among the souls of men outworn
Are folk of long ago; forgotten kings
Of cities buried by the sand or sea
In unremembered ages; shepherd boys
Who learned their piping ere the birth of Pan;
Slim maidens sweet to love; and children lost —
White petals fallen in a field of death
Where winter turning stood against the spring.
Yea, few there are who walk the flowering earth,
But here among its fields of asphodel
This windless underworld of dusk and dream
Has more than all the fields of earth could
 hold,
And all the vastness of the circling sea.

THE MAN

Look up where one but newly dead has come,
And round him gather comrades sick for home.

PERSEPHONE

Aye, still they come, and each for all he lost,
For all he loved and left is comfortless.

(The throng draws nearer, surrounding the new-comer, an old man who moves forward as though dazed and does not answer them.)

VOICES IN THE CROWD

(The change of speakers is indicated by spaces between the lines.)

What news of Argos?

And the Lion gate

Where elders sat of old?

What younger chieftains keep their state?

What tales of war are told?

What of the olive islands?

And Knossos' fair demesne ?
When the beacons blazed on the highlands
And the ships of war were seen,
I stayed my hand from the reaping,
I took my shield and spear —

Dust of the earth is heaping
Where we, who laughed at fear,
Left Crete in the sea wind's keeping
And sailed with her golden gear
To the sound of the women's weeping,
Till the wind began to veer
And the roll of the ocean thunder
Smote on the seamen's ear :
And we lost our ships and our plunder
But faced our captives here.

THE NEWCOMER

For fifty years I tilled an upland farm,
My sons had left me ; then the famine came.

(A woman presses through the crowd looking among them as for one she had lost.)

THE WOMAN

I left two children sleeping; but with me
A loving husband came whom now I seek,
That each to each may words of comfort speak:
But when my children wake I shall not hear.

(She sees PERSEPHONE and going to the step of the pavilion speaks to her.)

I know that those who loved on earth must be
In some way reunited.

PERSEPHONE

Many here

Beside the river wait for ones they loved,
And stretch when Charon comes their strength-
less arms;
And many search among the multitude
For those the God struck down before themselves.

And yet perchance with these who gather now
Is one who lacking you goes desolate.

*(A long procession of the dead appears coming
from the direction of the palace. With them is
Hades.)*

CHORUS

We who were lovers of life, who were fond of
the hearth and the homeland,
Gone like a drowner's cry borne on the perilous
wind,
Gone from the glow of the sunlight, now are in
exile eternal;
Strangers sit in the place dear to us once as our
own.

Happy are they; and they know not we were
as strangers before them;
Nay, nor that others shall come: Knowledge
belongs to the dead.

Life is so rich that the living look not away from
the present ;

Eyes that the sun made blind learn in the dusk
to see.

Once we had friends, we had kindred ; all of us
now are forgotten,

All but the hero-kings, lords of the glory of war ;

These, with the founders of cities, live for a little
in stories

Told of the deeds they did, not of the men
that they were.

Those who were mighty but linger, shadowy
forms in a legend ;

Never the minstrel's tale tells what they were
to their wives.

None on the lips of remembrance live as their
children knew them ;

Merged in the darkness, kings rank with the
recordless dead.

Whether our lifetime brought to us joy or the
burden of sorrow,
Whether in youth or age, all when we come
from the earth
Clinging to memories wander slow through the
shadowless meadows,
Dash from the proffered cup Lethe's oblivious
draught.

Long are the years and uncounted passed in
the seasonless twilight
Thinking of things that were, feeling the ache of
regret ;
Slowly the echoes fade and the homeland hills
are forgotten :
Over the flame-swept waste waters of healing
are poured.

Lovers of action, lovers of sunlight, rovers of ocean,
Shepherds, tillers of earth, yea, at the last we
forget.

Longer a woman remembers words that were
uttered in moonlight,
Girlhood's vision and dream, pitiful things of the
home.
Here by the rivers of Hades; Phlegethon, Acheron,
Lethe,
Wisdom comes, and the dead judge what they
did with their lives :
Never the clustering vineyard yielded to any its
fulness —
Ah, but the children here playing their desolate
games !

PERSEPHONE

The saddest of all sights my eyes have seen
Are grown-up games of children touched by death,
Who play at happy things they shall not be.

*(HADES enters the pavilion and takes his place
beside PERSEPHONE. The others range themselves
in a semicircle without.)*

HADES

We come to grant with you an audience
To Hermes, son of Zeus.

PERSEPHONE

Is Hermes here ?

HADES

He comes.

*(The crowd opens to make way for HERMES,
the messenger of ZEUS.)*

Be welcome, Hermes.

PERSEPHONE

Doubly welcome here ;

For last I saw you on a summer eve,
Above the field of Enna like a star,
Drop golden through the twilight. All the land
Lay hushed, and slowly over Ætna rose
The harvest moon. Then we, on either side
Demeter walking, shared in converse sweet —

And all around us were the nightingales.
Speak now of her, and tell, if once again
Your wingèd feet have borne you where she was,
How she endures her sorrow. Wide is grief
And spreads from Enna's field to Hades' throne.

CYANE

For you who wander where you will
The path of light is open still;
Go back and bring from Enna's field
The poorest blossom earth can yield,
For by its sight and touch and scent
Shall gathered sorrow be unpent,
And tearless anguish find relief
In gentle streams that lessen grief.

HERMES

From Zeus who rules with you the threefold realm
And on Olympus keeps his sovereign throne,
I come in solemn embassy to save
The world from ruin. Sweet to all is love,

And hard the loss of beauty once possessed,
But round the dying earth Demeter's curse
Clings like a serpent, coiling fold on fold,
And shall not loosen till Persephone —

PERSEPHONE

Ah!

HERMES

Till you once more beside her draw it off.
I come from Zeus to bring the maiden back.

PERSEPHONE

Out of the night,
Up to the light,
Mother, I come,
I come.

HADES

So eager are you!

(To HERMES) When I took for mine
The land of many guests, I envied not
Poseidon, nay, nor Zeus, and ages long

I lived contented with my sovereignty;
And then — Yea, even I have longed for love,
But find it not: and lo! I yield to fate.

(He turns to PERSEPHONE.)

Ever I stood and watched you where you sat
Yearning for that one thing I could not give,
And as I watched the certain knowledge came
That you must walk again the sunlit earth
And I, in darkness, live with grief alone.
Farewell, I set you free.

CYANE

Ah, me! Bereft!

PERSEPHONE

Cyane, you remember when we found
A sea-bird tangled in the cave-hung nets;
That bird am I, and there the wind and sun.

CYANE

Soon are the dead forgotten;
Slowly the dead forget.

PERSEPHONE

There can be no forgetting; there on earth
Will all we shared together know the change.
The day that was is done for me as you,
And careless girlhood dies to live no more.

CYANE

Come back and tell me of the things of earth.

PERSEPHONE

Ah no, Cyane! You have loved me well,
But deeper love is his who bids me go.

(*To HADES.*)

I will be mindful of your gentleness.

THE MAN

As when on earth beside a sick man's bed
Comes one full-flushed with youth and eagerness,
So would you come to us, and so would we,
Kindling, forget a moment what we are.

HADES

No gift have I of sweet, persuasive speech,
But this I know, that all things ruled by Fate
Wheel through recurrent changes, sun and moon,
The stars that lead the seasons, and the tides.
One thing alone is fixed and alters not,
Breaking the else unbroken cosmic round,
Death is eternal and immutable —
A timeless winter in whose frozen heart
No life can stir nor any seed awake;
And you would come to us as sunlight comes
To happier folk, as come the tides of spring —

PERSEPHONE

I could not, could not.

THE MAN

To you the helpless lift imploring hands.

CYANE

Come back. Come back. I cannot go to you.

PERSEPHONE

Not that! I could not.

(To HERMES.)

Quickly, lead me on;

For higher round me rolls the mounting wave
Whose clutch would draw me darkly back to
death.

*(As she turns to go, the throng without hastily
close up the lane through which HERMES had come
and surge nearer to the pavilion, blocking the exit.)*

CHORUS

Ever though bitter the portion given by Fate
to the living,

Yea, though a doom severe follow a man till
he die,

Not till the last slow breath when the spirit is
wafted to Hades,

Not till the limbs grow cold faileth the future of
hope.

Dreadful is death to the living, dreadful the
grave and its darkness,

Ah, but the poisoned dart turned in the wound is
this :

Man, when the tomb has enclosed him, finds in
the stretch of the future

Nothing to hope or plan — only the limitless
years.

Could there but be for the dying somewhere a
rift in the darkness,

Could but the dead men know light would
return at the last,

Were there a change in the distance nearing
through infinite ages,

Then would the slow years pass, waiting the
thing that would be.

PERSEPHONE

I will come back.

(In sight of all, she tastes of the pomegranate,

then goes slowly back toward HERMES, pausing beside him on the step.)

I will come back ;

Full-armed with garnered sweetness of the earth,
To be for wintry death like spring's return,
The hope and promise of the waiting year.

(As they pass in silence through the crowd, the voice of a young man alone by the river is heard.)

THE YOUNG MAN

Surely when the storm came, white against the
doorway

Stood a maiden watching, looking out to sea.

Vows she made Poseidon, fearful for her lover ;

Vows are quickly broken, tears are quick to dry.

Will she stand there lonely when another spring-
time

Sees the fleet of fishers lessen from the shore ?

Yesterday she loved me ; now the wheeling seagulls

Gather, whence we know not, where the ship
went down.

ACT V
THE TEMPLE

ACT V

*The portico of a temple on the cliff at Eleusis.
In the center an altar. It is the close of night, and
far below, between the columns, is the sea, gray,
with one paling planet over Salamis. PERSEPHONE,
followed by DEMETER, enters from the side.*

PERSEPHONE

I cannot cease to look upon the stars,
And lo! the waiting earth expects the sun.

DEMETER

Still keep the sun and stars their ancient round.

PERSEPHONE

But I upon them look with other eyes.
No more for me shall dawn unclouded come,
Or any sinking planet touch the sea

Inviolatè in beauty; sun and star,
The breathing glow and loveliness of earth,
Have suffered such a change as children's eyes
When first we see corruption peering forth.
I cannot vision beauty as of old,
Or look unmoved upon mortality;
For life I know to be a space of light
Between two fixed eternities of gloom
Whose double shadows reach from birth to death,
And wrap in folding darkness flower and God.

DEMETER

Who tastes of knowledge sees in loveliness
The shining veil wherein corruption hides.
Not idly thou and I at Sorrow's knees
Have stood.

PERSEPHONE

The heart of youth is filled with song
That flows unceasing on till stopped by tears;
And in the after silence thought begins.

DEMETER

Such silence filled the earth when you were gone,
And in the brooding hush came wisdom forth :
Wave after wave of life will strike the shore
And never one unbroken pass beyond.
Better it seemed that death should end it all,
And waveless lie at last the bounded sea.

PERSEPHONE

Ah, Mother, deem not death the greatest boon,
Nor be thy gift to men the gift of sleep.
So long as each may see the springtime come
As though no other spring had bloomed before,
Or any withered autumn browned the leaf,
For him illusion is reality ;
And in the scales where joy and grief are laid
A little love will balance many tears,
An hour of light the stretch of winter's gloom.

DEMETER

Such thoughts were mine in Celeus' stricken home,
When first the nobleness of them that strive

Against the seeming malice of the sky,
Rose like a refutation of my will
To plead against me.

PERSEPHONE

Understanding comes
Through equal sorrow; this the only way.

DEMETER

Had man been made less noble than he is
Or something nobler, then the choice were clear.
This compound of aspiring impotence,
This blend of power with futility;
The infinite capacity for good
In hearts that harbor equal infamy;
The fruitage blasted in the growing seed;
The strife renewed from age to after age
Whose issue is the selfsame nothingness,
Have made me look on life with double view;
And will that fights itself, divided, fails
Of all fruition.

PERSEPHONE

Ah! be ruled by me.

Since men there are, give aid to make them blest;
Nor deem what greater good there might have
been

If that strange thing which makes them what
they are

Had never marked them from the soulless beasts.

DEMETER

Two paths there are, and you have chosen one.

My reason bade me go the darker way,

But all that reasons not would follow you,

Turning, instinctive, toward the lure of light.

PERSEPHONE

Let instinct rule, for reason's heart is cold,

And one who acts by reason acts for self;

With folded arms he sits, and to his knees

No hapless children climb for comforting.

DEMETER

Ah! Thou hast come upon me like the spring,
And all the frozen winter of my heart
That longed to break its ice-bound bitterness,
But could not, now is melted at thy word.
Yea, I will blind myself to what must be —
Spring's broken promise and the grave that
waits —

And give again as once I gave, not death
But resurrection; foster flower and fruit,
And in the heart the gentle lure of hope.
And us forevermore shall dying man
Hold dear as symbols of triumphant life,
That in the ways of children blooms afresh,
As from the withered fall of Earth's decay
Eternal and recurrent springs the seed.

(The VOICES OF MEN are heard approaching the temple from below. Only the rhythm of the words is distinguishable.)

With morning come again my worshippers ;
But I will give them now a word of joy.

THE VOICES OF WOMEN (*Below*)

Yea, and Woman, she is burdened with child-
bearing,

And the child for whom she made herself a
drudge,

Lured by younger laughter goes away uncaring —

At the first they love us, at the last, they
judge.

Then in dream she sees him face imagined danger,

Prays the God to guide his rose-snared feet :

If he come again, behold ! he is a stranger ;

His are ways she knows not, eyes she cannot
meet.

PERSEPHONE

As long as youth, when moonlight floods the
grove,

May walk unconscious of the sunken graves,

Rewaking echoes of low words of love —
Immortal echoes roused from age-old tombs —
No after bulk of care can turn the scale
Or blur the brightness of that memory;
For man has moments when he seems a God.

VOICES OF MEN AND WOMEN

(Still below but nearer.)

Who from the outer ocean,
Who from the inland sea,
Has the skill to tell,
Though he reason well,
What the soul of man may be?
Not from the wheeling planets,
Not in the scroll of earth,
Has the wisest read
How the tides are led
Or the stars were brought to birth.
Dark is the end of being,
Veiled is the primal cause;

And of life we know
But that ebb and flow
Are ruled by changeless laws.

Glimpses are all our vision,
Mystery folds us round ;
But the shafted might
Of the spirit's light
Flames on the dark profound,

Searches the depth, and brightens,
Soaring from Fate's control ;
Nor shall ills that reach
To the life of each
Avail to touch the soul.

We whom a famine conquers,
We whom a drought can kill,
Though we mark our years
With a trail of tears,
Are victors, victors still.

(DEMETER and PERSEPHONE have withdrawn into the temple where they remain, invisible. TRIPTOLEMUS and the other PRINCES of Eleusis, followed by men and women, range themselves about the altar.)

CHORUS

Through the bitter months of famine we have
brought thee
Corn and honey; and with parchèd lips of
drought
We have told the tale of sorrow, and besought thee
Lest the flame of life that lingered flicker out.
Silence answered; nor has any gift we bore thee
Won requital in the ending of our need.
Swaying round thine altar now we weave before
thee
Magic measures bringing fruitage of the seed.

VOICE OF DEMETER

Attend the words of God.

TRIPTOLEMUS

Demeter speaks !

DEMETER

Behold I have relented, and again
Will give the seed and bring the harvest forth.
Once more shall earth be fruitful, feel the rain ;
And on the barren valleys spring shall come,
Like sight returning slowly to the blind.

CHORUS

Now that leafless tree-tops offer no concealing,
Black among the branches shines the watchful
crow ;
Volleyed with the rain-drops come the swallows
wheeling,
Then through silver olives winds of summer blow.
Soon shall need of reapers turn the fisher shoreward,
Northing now from Nilus flocks of cranes
will fly :

Life triumphant rising moves, resistless, forward ;
Children fill the places left by us who die.

Lady of the Wild Things, when the buds are
showing,

When the ripened olive brings the end of dearth,
When across the harvest fragrant winds are
blowing,

Thine will be the rapture of awakened earth.

DEMETER

Once more the fields, responsive, wait your work.
Go forth and labor ; and when Hesper's lamp
Among my darkened columns leads the night,
Will I from ancient urns of wisdom pour
The golden flood of knowledge, that ye learn,
And in the after twilights teach your sons
How best to till the earth and serve the gods.

TRIPTOLEMUS

Like dogs that look into their masters' eyes
And strive there to divine the secret thing

They cannot understand, which men call speech,
Are we who look upon the infinite;
We hear the voice of Nature, but the sense
Is lost.

DEMETER

Who comes to me shall learn of life
Rising reverdured from the clasp of death,
And one, whom Zeus reluctant summoned back,
In maiden freshness come from Hades' hall,
By sorrow's touch ennobled. Fair is she,
With autumn's tempered beauty joined to spring,
And dwells beside me till again she go
To bear the summer downward to the dead.
I give into your hands a lighted lamp
Whose glow shall lead you in the years to come,
To see in darkness beauty. Now go forth.

CHORUS

Crouched beside the elders oft we heard in childhood
All the garnered wisdom gathered from the earth;

Some had sailed the ocean; some had crossed
the wildwood :

None had tracked the darkness bounding death
and birth.

Whence we come we know not, nor the end of
being ;

Ask we of our Fathers there is none that knows.
Never wreathèd prophet, past and future seeing,
Read the crimson riddle blushing in the rose.

Of the dusk we know not, nor have need of know-
ing ;

Heavy with the harvest lies the waiting field,
Children rise about us gifts of light bestowing,
Unto us, the living, life is now revealed,
Nobler made by sorrow, fairer for decaying ;
Out of dying winter vivid spring is born.

Unto thee, Demeter, turn thy people, praying :
Death the Maiden yieldeth, earth shall yield
the corn.

THE following pages contain advertisements of a few of the Macmillan books on kindred subjects.

IMPORTANT NEW POETRY

Spoon River Anthology

By EDGAR LEE MASTERS

New edition with new poems

With illustrations and decorations by OLIVER HERFORD

One of the most remarkable books of many a year — this is the consensus of opinion of Mr. Masters's Anthology. Originality of idea distinguished its physical construction; skill in the handling of words and lines marked the working out of this idea, while every individual poem was notable for the embodiment in it of great human understanding and sympathy. Mr. Masters's text is now to appear in a more elaborate dress with illustrations by Oliver Herford. The artist has not only made a beautiful book — he has given a new significance to many of the poems. He has succeeded in really interpreting Masters's work.

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IMPORTANT NEW POETRY

TWO NEW BOOKS BY JOHN MASEFIELD

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The Locked Chest and The Sweeps of Ninety-Eight

That Mr. Masefield is well grounded in the principles of dramatic art has been amply proved by the plays which he has published hitherto — "The Faithful," "Philip the King," "The Tragedy of Pompey" among others. In this book two further additions are made to a literature which he has already so greatly enriched. In the realm of the one-act play, which it has been maintained is a type all unto itself, he is seen to quite as good effect as in the longer work; in fact this volume, this first new book from Masefield since his American tour, may well rank with his best.

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NEW MACMILLAN POETRY

Fruit Gathering

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Author of "Sadhana," "The King of the Dark Chamber," etc.

Perhaps of all of Tagore's poetry the most popular volume is "Gitanjali." It was on this work that he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. These facts lend special interest to the announcement of this book, which is a sequel to that collection of religious "Song Offerings." Since the issue of his first book, some four years ago, Tagore has rapidly grown in popularity in this country, until now he must be counted among the most widely read of modern poets. Another volume of the merit, the originality, the fine spiritual feeling of "Gitanjali" would even further endear him to his thousands of American admirers.

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BY ROBINSON JEFFERS

California is now to have its part in the poetry revival. Robinson Jeffers is a new poet, a man whose name is as yet unknown but whose work is of such outstanding character that once it is read he is sure of acceptance by those who have admired the writings of such men as John G. Neihardt, Edgar Lee Masters, Edwin Arlington Robinson, and Thomas Walsh. Virtually all of the poems in this first collection have their setting in California, most of them in the Monterey peninsula, and they realize the scenery of the great State with vividness and richness of detail. The author's main source of inspiration has been the varying aspects of nature.

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